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# AURUM

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Newsletter of the Ballarat Gold Museum Society

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## APRIL MEETING

The next meeting will be on Thursday, April 9th at 1.30pm when the speaker will be the Reverend Professor Robert Gribble. His talk is entitled 'The private lives of The Wesleys', that is John and Charles Wesley of Methodist fame. Roy Taylor and Bev Newey are on the Tea Roster. Please let Joanne know if you can't attend. Five minutes to be advised.....

## MARCH MEETING

The scheduled speaker, Mr. Bob Fearly was indisposed and one of our members, Dennis Spielvogel, presented an account of a visit he and Veronca made to the International Gold Museum in Tankavarra, Finland. Set in forest and receiving heavy snow falls during the winter months it is geared to summer visitors and has many aspects which are similar to those at Sovereign Hill but on a smaller scale. It's main claim to fame is that it is the only International Gold museum in the world and represents the history of development of gold in 32 countries. One of the slides shown was taken when they took an unplanned detour and showed the most ENORMOUS branch of IKEA. The first International Goldpanning competition was held here in 1977, complete with a representative from Sovereign Hill.



## **PRESIDENT'S NOTE**

I spoke to David Manning last week. He is in good spirits & adamant that he wishes to remain a member of the society. He no longer wishes to have a weekly back room commitment, but promises to try to come to a meeting or two each year.

As our second President he wants to keep abreast of our activities & satisfy himself that our meeting formats are holding fast to past standards!

David is still driving his car and takes Audrey out to restaurants for lunch regularly.....since he prefers their food to Meals on Wheels!

**Bill McGregor**

## **GUIDING NOTE**

### **The First Morning Tea of the Year**

On Tuesday 24th March a morning tea was held for Gold Museum Society members plus those museum staff who could come. Unfortunately the timing turned out to be a problem and we ended up having our tea and nibbles in the upstairs lunch room because there was no other suitable space available due to the preparation for the opening of an exhibition the next day. There were 22 people in that room which was quite a squeeze. After a while we went down to the Clark gallery and sat amongst Jessica's gowns while we continued the morning's program. The interview of Ted Maidment gave us some background to a man whose life has taken unexpected turns on several occasions. I am hoping to have a full report for the next Aulum.

Next, the front-of-house volunteers worked on a questionnaire which I hope will help me plan future programs for similar days.. In general the volunteers felt confident about the various aspects of interacting with the public. One thing that came out of discussion about the questionnaire was that school groups can pose real problems for volunteers, and visitors, if the groups are not under sufficient control by their teachers. This lead to questions about how much authority we, as volunteers, have with regards to pulling up students who are misbehaving. We can certainly speak to teachers about our concerns and we can, for instance, ask children not to run.

Thank you to all who contributed to this morning tea and to the further training session for front-of-house volunteers.

**Helen Muir.**

### **From the Archive.....from Aulum, September 2003**

Streets paved with Gold.... It has been said that the streets of early Ballarat were literally paved with gold. Nuggets were frequently found in the quartz metal laid down in the streets, but a particularly lucky find in July 1870 outshone many of the others. Some boys were picking up quartz stones from Rubicon Street and shying them at an old boiler by the roadside when one of them picked up a mass of golden quartz containing ten and a half ounces of gold. The gold lay in heavy masses throughout the stone and it was wondered how its brilliance had escaped the puddler, sluiceman, the carter, the metal-breaker, the metal-spreader and others. The specimen was sold to Wittkowski's who kept it on display for all to view.

## **The Peter Cox Collection**

In 2010, Peter Cox donated to the Museum a diverse collection of books, research notes, maps and artefacts. He passed away in January of this year. Peter was a long-time member of FOSH and the Ballarat Historical Society, amongst numerous other groups. Since arriving in Australia from England, Peter had built up a huge collection based around his love of history, especially Victorian military history and gold prospecting. Peter made the donation at a time when he was downsizing from his Waubra home into a unit in Ballarat. I visited him on a few occasions to browse through boxes of books and confirm his selections to come to the museum. As a result of these visits over 600 items were donated.

A major component of the collection covers military history, with a focus on Victorian regiments and associated British regiments. Peter researched and collected material on the various units and events, especially the 40<sup>th</sup> regiment of foot which fought at Eureka. Peter was an enthusiastic re-enactor and loved his role as a member of the 40<sup>th</sup>. Another favourite topic for Peter was the Battle for Ballarat, a war game played out at Victoria Park with competing units trying to defend or storm the mullock heap in the centre of the park. The whole event was a mixture of high farce and dogged determination to win.

Peter had a great interest in gold prospecting and his collection includes a wide range of guide books and documents on gold mining, miners' rights and the geology of Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania. There are dozens of prospecting and gold mining maps of the regions he had investigated. Added to this are sets of Geological Survey of Victoria reports. There is much here that would interest the budding prospector.

Peter's interests covered a range of other subject areas including the Royal Society of Victoria, the Great War, fire brigades, firearms, pioneering stories, Australian and local histories, historical furniture and technology.

Peter Cox is very much missed and his research collection held at the Gold Museum stands as a permanent memorial to his life and interests.

**Roger Trudgeon**



## Notes from the Curator

Gold Museum Tour Guides will need to keep their eyes open for a wide range of exhibition changes in the immediate future. There are two new exhibitions opening in the Clark Galleries, a new temporary display in the south-west corner of the Cowles Gallery and we have moved the Cabinet of Curiosities to the Simon Pavilion.

The new major exhibitions are of course the Ballarat in World War 1 show and the Chinese Fashion Competition show. It is a run to the finish with both these shows and they will be up and running by the time you are reading this newsletter. In last month's Aurum I provided background on the World War 1 exhibition, so this month I'll focus on the Chinese fashion competition exhibition. In 2013, Sovereign Hill's Marketing Department launched a major fashion design competition which was aimed at students in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. The challenge put to the fashion design students was to create a costume inspired by the fashion trends of the 1850s gowns that might have been worn on the goldfields. In 2013 about 100 entries were received but in the latest competition over 1000 entries were submitted. From a group of finalists ten students were given the opportunity to actually create their gowns to be presented at a fashion parade in Shanghai in February, 2015.

The exhibition at the Gold Museum features the gowns created by the ten finalists. Included in the exhibition will be footage from the Shanghai fashion show and copies of many of the entries received. Each designer has provided a statement about what has inspired their work and

these will be presented as well. It is clear that the competition has captured the imagination of large numbers of students and the winner of the 2013 competition, Zhuo Xuan Li from Beijing, has since then opened her own design studio. I understand that part of the interest in the competition is gaining experience in designing and making historical costume, which in turn opens opportunities in the world of movies, television and even historic houses and museums. The show will be open to the public from the end of March.

Another display we are presenting relates to an International Symposium of School Life and school History Museums and Collections held at Sovereign Hill from March 25 – 27. Museum people from all over the world are gathering at Sovereign Hill to discuss the issues and opportunities in this specialised area. It is the first time in 32 years that the group has met outside Europe – quite an achievement for the organisation. The symposium looks at the effectiveness of role play, the teaching of history and modes of presenting history in museums. At the museum we will present a small display focussed around a television monitor showing photographs of the costume schools at Sovereign Hill over the past thirty years. Included in the exhibit will be an old school desk along with slates and a couple of 1850s style children to keep an eye on you as you reminisce about early days of education.

Do come and have a look at all these new exhibits and I hope you find them interesting and enjoyable.

Roger Trudgeon

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